# The Way of Human Life

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What kind of life should a person live? At over eighty years old, when I look up at green mountains with white clouds floating above them, I find myself pondering such youthful questions. When I ask myself whether I have lived a life not shameful as a human being, I cannot confidently say "yes," but neither do I think I have utterly failed. It seems I have lived somewhere in between—halfway, inadequate, and unsatisfactory.

## 1. Living in the Likeness of God

When I look at the birds of the air, I sense that birds have their own way of life. When I watch butterflies drifting, I feel that butterflies have been given their own way of life. To live without resisting this order seems natural. Yet human life is not as simple as that. Thinking along these lines, I recall the Bible.

The Almighty God, with absolute wisdom and authority, created all living creatures and placed them on this earth. Humans, too, were created by God to live. But Scripture records that humans, unlike all other creatures, were made in the likeness of God. Unless we seek to understand and explore this meaning, we cannot grasp the way of life God intended for humankind. Surely God did not create all things idly or carelessly, without any plan or purpose.

If it is God's will for fish to live as fish, then it seems proper for human beings to live as human beings. A fish must not try to live like a cat, and humans must not try to live like pigs. So what does it mean to live as a human being? We were created in the likeness of God, but that does not mean we can live as God Himself. Yet because we were made in His likeness, we can live in a way that resembles Him.

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## 2. Living Spiritually

What does it mean that humans were created in God's likeness? How do humans differ from other animals that were not made in His likeness? This question is relatively easy. Human beings, like God, have a spiritual nature. We can sense God, who is Spirit; we can perceive the spiritual world and spiritual matters. It is instinctive. Thus, every being called "human" lives with an awareness of spiritual existence.

On a lower level, people fear ghosts or spirits. They sense benevolent spiritual beings such as angels and wish for their protection. Sometimes they call these beings "gods." Even if not well understood, people feel that such a spiritual world overlaps their own—contrary to scientific knowledge or reasoning. This is more instinct than logic. That is why it is often frightening. I once heard of a dignified adult who publicly professed materialism, yet was so afraid at night that he could not even go alone to relieve himself.

On a higher level, people sometimes sense a noble, invisible, untouchable, indescribable presence. It is a perception beyond reason or logic, an instinctive awareness. They may feel that this exalted presence watches over them, gives them life, and sustains them. Unconsciously, they may bring their hands together and whisper, "Thank you." This noble presence is far beyond their intellectual or linguistic ability. They neither feel compelled to explain it nor capable of doing so. They simply feel gratitude for being given life and rejoice in being alive.

Is this not the spiritual way of life appropriate for human beings? A poet once wrote that the trees clap their hands in praise of God. In the same way, humans, consciously aware, bring their hands together in prayer to this noble God, offering gratitude and praise. They raise their hands in joy, celebrate with feasts, sing songs, and hold festivals together. This is the way of life fitting for human beings, created as spiritual beings in the likeness of God.

## 3. Living with Others

God commanded human beings to "be fruitful and multiply." This implies that humans are to form families, build communities, and live socially. Human beings were created as social creatures. Birds of the air and fish of the sea are also included in this

command, but what is special here is that humans, made in God's likeness, were commanded in this way.

Our God is a unique being, one God who exists as multiple persons (personalities). Each person of the Godhead is bound together by love. In other words, God has existed from the beginning as love itself, as a community.

Therefore, human relationships, too, were meant to exist as communities bound by love. But the image of God given to humans was damaged, broken, distorted, and warped by sin. As a result, human relationships collapsed. Instead of loving and helping one another, people came to fight and hurt each other. Our relationship with God was also distorted, leading us to forget Him and turn to idols. This is the tragedy into which humankind has fallen.

## 4. For the Restoration of Humanity

Yet God reached out to humankind, whose God-given image was damaged, broken, and distorted, to heal, restore, and correct us, and to bring us back to our original state. Though this is utterly impossible by human will or effort, nothing is impossible for the Almighty. This outstretched hand of God's love is the Gospel. Those who have understood this through the teaching of Scripture now serve as God's messengers, sent by Him. Those who have encountered this love and been restored in their humanity are truly blessed.

Of course, as long as we live in this imperfect world, human restoration will not be complete. But the teaching of Jesus—and of the Bible—is that this world itself will be remade. When that day comes, we too will be fully remade, restored to the original state in which we were created in God's likeness, to enjoy fellowship with Him and to rejoice fully in His blessings. Those who have come to understand this have devoted themselves to being preachers and transmitters of the Gospel, laboring tirelessly. They find great joy in living for the restoration of humanity and for the happiness of others.